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SAPC-15303 ✓  
Copy 1 of 6.

29 April 1957

MEMORANDUM FOR : Project Director  
Director of Operations  
Contracting Officer

SUBJECT : Weight Reduction of the U-2

REFERENCE : Ops Memo 26 April 1957 (SAPC-15135)

1. The reference memo is, I think, a good approach as an entrée for future discussions on the weight reduction and increased mission capability program.

2. I believe one additional alternative could be shown under para. 7 a, covering an estimated reduction of 300 gallons of fuel and 236 pounds of equipment, giving a penetration altitude of approximately 67,186 feet with altitude over target (mid-mission) of [ ] feet and final altitude over base on return of approximately [ ] feet. This alternative is consistent with the presentation in the ref memo.

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3. I agree with [ ] memo that the maximum altitude benefits to be realized can best be attained by reduction of fuel load with resultant decrease in mission duration and penetration radius. Other possible reduction is in equipment, both mission and personal equipment weights, and pilot weight, although the latter will be hard to realize except by fortuitous future recruitment.

4. I believe the main "fly in the ointment" is the added weight of Rainbow which is still unknown but may offset the suggested saving of 236 pounds through elimination of unnecessary equipment on the basis of each mission having a tailor-made aircraft for a specific mission; i.e., either all photo coverage without Elint, or vice versa.

5. I suggest that weight reduction and specialized mission concept be further reviewed and discussed with [ ] during their forthcoming visit, with [ ] and Mr. C. L. Johnson, and possibly with Col. Beerli during Mr. Bissell's forthcoming visit to Detachment C.

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6. I favor directing our attention toward the concept of specialized mission equipment, reduced fuel load, carefully planned mission flight plans, increased EGT, as a means for increasing operational altitudes over target areas in future operations as enemy capability to attain higher altitudes becomes real.

7. During future discussions I believe it essential that Operations and Contracting Officer be represented in order that complete coverage of these items can be best researched.

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J. A. GIBBS  
Deputy Project Director